A central aim of the LCFF is to boost funding for high-need students

- The LCFF, implemented in 2013–14, has three major goals:
  1. Simplify state funding for public K–12 schools
  2. Revamp accountability
  3. Increase funding for high-need students—those who are low income, English Learners, homeless, and/or foster youth

- Two fundamental reforms:
  - Weighted funding formula: additional funding for districts with more high-need students
  - Local control: fewer restrictions on spending
LCFF provides additional funding to address concentrated need at the district level
Key questions about LCFF spending

- How has the LCFF affected spending in districts with different levels of need?
  - How is money being spent?

- How has LCFF spending affected educational environments?
  - Class size, level of teacher experience, support staff

- Does district spending target students with the greatest need?
  - Data limitations make measurement difficult
Student spending has increased since 2012–13…

Student spending in low-, middle-, and high-need districts

![Graph showing student spending trends from 2003 to 2017 for low-, middle-, and high-need districts. The spending per pupil is depicted on the y-axis, while the fiscal year is shown on the x-axis. The graph includes lines representing different need levels: 0–30%, 30–55%, and 55%+, each labeled accordingly.]
…with relative increases in high-need districts
Districts are spending more on staffing

- Spending on staffing—especially instructional staff—has increased in all districts
  - Smaller increases in non-staff student spending (textbooks, equipment, professional development)

- There have been *relative* spending increases on non-teacher spending in high-need districts
  - Pupil services and support staff (e.g., counselors, nurses, librarians)
  - Administrative staff; benefits spending
  - Other non-staff student spending
What about high-need students in lower-need districts?

- Hundreds of thousands of high-need students in low-need districts

- *If* districts spend equally on all students:
  - Relative LCFF increase per high-need student is 1/2 to 2/3 of the district-level increase

- *However*, LCFF additional dollars are intended for the highest-need students within district
  - Many districts have large gaps in need across schools
Many districts have large income gaps across schools
How do districts spend on their highest-need schools?

- Districts spend $200 to $300 more (per pupil) on teachers in their highest-need schools
  - This pattern predates LCFF and has changed little
- **Tradeoff** between teacher qualifications and pupil-teacher ratios
  - High-need schools have smaller class sizes but less-experienced teachers (with lower salaries)
Policy implications

- Novice hires at high-need schools mean improvements in student outcomes may take time to accumulate
- Efforts to improve placement and retention of qualified educators are crucial
- Improving data collection to track spending at the site/student level could lead to better monitoring
  - Local Control and Accountability Plan monitoring is messy and contentious
  - Federal requirements may lead to better data
Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.